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Philosophical analysis of the phenomena of "happiness" (aspects of medical etiology)

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Abstract

This paper presents a multidisciplinary theoretical analysis of the category of "happiness." The category is located at the intersection of theoretical medicine, psychology, neurobiology, and axiology and is considered in connection with the need for its qualitative measurement. The relevance of the research is associated with the necessity of building a conceptual bridge between normative models of happiness in philosophy and their causal correlates in medical cognition. In order to form a holistic biopsychosocial approach to human health, the main philosophical interpretations of the concept of happiness are given in their correspondence with modern models of the medical etiology of diseases and the state of an individual's health. A hermeneutic interpretation of the relational-ontological paradigm of happiness in the types of Confucian, Platonic, and Aristotelian ethics as practical philosophy has been carried out. The focus of medical etiology, from the internal order and external connections, shifts from the attributive to the functional aspect, anticipating modern models of happiness in which health and well-being are assessed through the individual's ability for meaningful activity and the realization of life potential. For this reason, axiological and existential dimensions of understanding the relationship between happiness and health have been introduced into the biopsychosocial model. The pluralistic nature of the causality of happiness has been determined, which is associated with an integrative etiological matrix, within the framework of which the causality of a complex phenomenon is located simultaneously at several interrelated levels: cognitive-structural, socio-practical, teleological-activity-based, and existential-phenomenological.

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Keywords

Human being, personality, happiness, ontology, etiology, health, harmony, existence, value, cognition, hermeneutics, tradition, paradigm, biopsychosocial approach, model, causality, state, factor.

Introduction

In the modern world, marked by an increase in psychosomatic diseases, burnout syndrome and depression [Водопьянова, 2008; Ермакова, 2010], the category of "happiness" has ceased to be

exclusively a subject of philosophical speculation and poetic metaphors. It becomes the object of close study of theoretical medicine, psychology, government, neurobiology and axiology, as a subject of operationalization, indexation and management [Долан, 2019, pp. 81-82]. The idea of the unattainability of happiness is becoming widespread. In such a situation, the pursuit of happiness turns into a search for the path of "recovery" [Мишутина, 2009; Королева, 2013].

In the application of a scientific and medical approach to operationalization and measurement of happiness (through the level of neurotransmitters, hormones or psychometric scales), the problem of determining the qualitative object of measurement arises. The answer to this question lies outside, the laboratories - in the space of philosophical thought, where fundamentally different interpretations of happiness have been competing for millennial. Thus, the relevance of the work is due to the need to build a conceptual bridge between normative models of happiness in philosophy - that is, concepts that set happiness as the ideal standard for a full human life (for example, Aristotelian eudaimonia), and not just as an actual psychophysiological state - and their etiological (causal) correlates in medicine to form a more holistic, biopsychosocial approach to human health.

Methodology and sources

The purpose of this theoretical study is a meta-analysis of the ontology of the phenomenon of happiness in the system of its fundamental scientific foundations, which were reflective and valuative (value) philosophical paradigms, an empirical approach. The phenomenon is realized through the features of the ontopsychology of personality - individual reflexive processes and states. Based on the principle of anthropocentric medical cognition, we define the concept of happiness as an interdisciplinary category. The study of human nature and the increase in knowledge about its features means a phased theoretical study of the phenomenon and the systematization of cognitive foundations.

The first stage of research is associated with highlighting the philosophical foundations of the analysis of the concept, which are paradigm attitudes. Foundations are the essence of a system of theories, concepts of the worldview order for understanding the mechanisms of thinking and life. When analyzing happiness, the following were used: a system of philosophical and epistemological, methodological foundations of research. The principle of consistency is attributed to worldview grounds. Epistemological and methodological grounds are a method of analysis and synthesis, the principle of complementarity of explanatory and descriptive approaches, empirical, theoretical and system-structural approaches. The general scientific grounds for analyzing the phenomenon were a level approach, through which the reasons for the existence of the phenomenon are combined. The research tool was an informational approach that explains the unity and relationship of a person and the environment, which serves as a methodology for predicting the state of consciousness.

The second stage of work is the formation of the category of happiness on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach in the online design of the medical and philosophical section of the study. As a project in relation to the individual ontological space of a person, the concept of value and the concept of meaning, combined through the hermeneutic method, are used. From the standpoint of the salutogenesis paradigm in medicine, happiness is presented as an ability for self-reflection. The third stage of the study is to document the results and practical conclusions.

Results and discussion

The aim of this theoretical study is to compare key philosophical interpretations of the concept of happiness and to identify their correlations with modern models of medical etiology (causality) of

diseases and health status.

1. The desire to identify a variety of prevailing ideas about happiness is the result of applying an empirical approach to its analysis, as well as the reducibility of such diversity to unity using the concept of "life satisfaction" [Мишутина, 2009].

In modern sociocultural scientific discourse, the concept of happiness undergoes a significant reduction: it is reduced either to a subjective affective experience (in the spirit of the hedonic psychology of Kahneman and Deiner), or to instrumental success, measured by external social benefits, for example, as in the databases of happiness of Ruut Veenhoven [Veenhoven, 1988, c. 333–354].

Within the framework of this study, the hermeneutic method performs two main functions: it provides a historical and philosophical reconstruction of the concept of happiness in its original, unreduced form, allowing to restore the semantic integrity of ancient texts and their cultural and historical context, and also serves as a tool for systematic analysis and comparison of various approaches to happiness within the framework of the classical philosophical tradition itself, revealing the internal unity and variability of its conceptual foundations. Under this methodology, happiness (eudaimonia, with Greek $\epsilon \rightarrow \delta\alpha\iota\mu\omicron\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ - "prosperity," "bliss," "happiness") is interpreted not as a psychological phenomenon, but as an ontological state derived from the objective architectonics of the human soul. The key to understanding is the internal order (cosmos) of the soul (psyche), described [Платон, 1994, с. 276-278 [439c-441c], 284-285 [441e-442d]] in the "State": a harmonious hierarchical relationship of its principles - reasonable, furious and lust, where the rule of reason establishes justice. Thus, the hermeneutic reconstruction of the Platonic concept reveals happiness as an objective consequence of the cognitive ascent to ideas (gnosis) and ethical likening to the divine order. This interpretation, which derives the phenomenon from the internal structure and purpose of existence, opposes reductionist models and sets the main vector for comparative analysis: happiness, in our understanding, as a natural result of a properly arranged being, and not a random or purely subjective affect. The critical pathos of Plato's concept is that it accuses the unfortunate of ignorance and the happy of duty. Happiness ceases to be a gift of fate or luck, becoming a moral and cognitive task that requires a person to make heroic efforts to transform his own nature. This is its incredible exactingness and its eternal attractiveness, challenging any compromise and relativistic interpretations of human well-being [Платон, 1993, с. 124–131]. Hermeneutic analysis of the Confucian tradition, focused on the central ontopsihological categories "ren," "li" and "xiao," reveals a fundamentally different, relational-ontological paradigm of happiness. Unlike the Platonic model of the inner soul cosmos, Confucian happiness (Fu) has no autonomous being outside the system of interpersonal connections. Its ontological condition is not the knowledge of transcendental ideas, but the impeccable performance of ritualized social roles through which the human essence itself is constituted. The key concept of "ren," often translated as "philanthropy," is interpreted in this context not simply as virtue, but as a fundamental way of being-in-community, where the self ("I") acquires completeness only through the recognition and affirmation of the Other [Конфуций, 2001, с. 31 [II, 7], 71 [VI, 28], 100 [XII, 1], 105 [XII, 22]].

Summing up the analysis of the Confucian interpretation of happiness, it can be argued that its triad (longevity, wealth, virtuous descendants) is not just a set of benefits, but an emergent property determined by a correctly built social space. This cosmos is constructed by daily ethical effort ("Li") and filial piety ("Xiao"). Thus, this paradigm offers a strict etiology of happiness, where it is completely determined by external and procedural factors: its source is not a static state of mind, but the dynamics of correctly directed social actions. It is this social dynamics that acts as the key determining mechanism that forms the harmonious ("He") field of relations, which, in turn, systematically generates the

experience of the highest good.

Therefore, Confucian interpretation places at the center of the etiology of well-being not internal neurochemical or psychological balance, but the quality of social determinants as the primary causal environment. The identification of this deterministic mechanism is of fundamental importance for etiology, as it shifts the research focus from describing the parameters of happiness to analyzing the external, reproducible social conditions that cause it.

The hermeneutic interpretation of Aristotelian "Nicomachean Ethics" reveals happiness (eudaimonia) as a teleological and axiological category radically different from both the Platonic ontological state and the Confucian relational property. If for Plato happiness is a static harmony of structure, and for Confucius - the emergent effect of correct connections, then Aristotle, through the prism of human function, defines it as the activity of the soul in accordance with the highest virtue throughout the fullness of life. The key to understanding here is the concept of entelechy - the full realization of existence in accordance with its own nature and purpose. A hermeneutical reading of this term in the context of ethics allows us to reveal eudemonia not as an experience or result, but as the process of a reasonable-virtuous life, where happiness is identical to the self-realization of the human essence. Based on the above, the Aristotelian etiology of happiness is rooted in the immanent nature of man as a "rational living being": its reason is the actualization of the inherent potential for thinking (dianoetic virtues) and social life (ethical virtues) through practical choice. This paradigm shifts the focus of medical etiology from internal order or external connections to the dynamic concept of "functioning," anticipating modern biopsychosocial models, where health and well-being are assessed through the ability to meaningful activity and the realization of life potentials, and the disease - as their blocking or deprivation [Аристотель, 1983, p. 53-55 [1097b-1098a], 68-70 [1102a-1103a], 88 - 100 [1111b-1115a]; Аристотель, 1975, pp. 394-395 [412a-413a]].

2. Unique scientific approach to the analysis of factors affecting the state of the individual on the way to happiness was proposed in the 2019, XXI c. Paul Dolan [4]. Its contextual approach involves assessing opportunities in designing behavior and understanding the results of activities on the way to the desired state. As an instrumental basis, a complex of the most effective factors of influence on human behavior caused by unconscious processes is used [Dolan et al., 2012; Dolan et al., 2010]. The allocation of the so-called "Mindspace" (Mindspace) as a space of the operational model is aimed at "analysis of situational factors": Messenger (communicator), Incentives (reward), Norms (social norms), Defaults (standard settings), Salience (distinguishing feature), Priming (effect of antecedence), Affect (emotionality), Commitments, Ego [Долан, 2019, с. 218, 248]. In this series, Silence (a distinctive feature) is called the most significant as an element in obtaining feedback that signals feelings of happiness. Thus, four interconnected elements are the most functional for self-modification: the factors "communicator," "reward," "stimulus," and "distinctive feature." In this case, an opportunity is formed for a rational, socio-practical awareness of the aims of the system of attitudes, obligations, and an understanding of the norms of the social environment [Долан, 2019, p. 219].

The concept of the Russian researcher P. D. Tishchenko represents health as a phenomenon of the existential-phenomenological order, which makes it possible to significantly expand its understanding beyond biomedical reductionism. According to Tishchenko, health is an authentic being-in-the-world - a state in which a person retains a holistic connection with his own body, life context and system of meanings [Dolan et al., 2012].

It is this approach that correlates with normative models of happiness in philosophy (such as Aristotelian eudaimonia), where well-being is also interpreted as the completeness of the realization of human nature in harmony with oneself and the world. Health impairment, according to Tishchenko,

appears as alienation - a loss of internal unity, leading to fragmentation of experience and loss of semantic orientation.

Thus, Tishchenko's position creates a theoretical basis for building a conceptual bridge between the philosophical understanding of happiness and medical etiology: if health is the ability to authentic existence, then happiness can be considered as its highest form, and illness can be considered as a deficit or distortion of this ability. This perspective enriches the biopsychosocial model by introducing into it the axiological and existential measurements necessary for a holistic understanding of the relationship between happiness and health.

Conclusion

Comparative analysis of key philosophical interpretations of happiness and identification of their correlation with modern models of medical etiology allows us to formulate the following fundamental conclusions.

1. Establishing the pluralistic nature of the causality of happiness. It should be concluded that the philosophical tradition offers not a single, but a pluralistic model of the causality (etiology) of happiness. Each of the considered paradigms - Platonic, Confucian, Aristotelian and modern phenomenological [Dolan et al., 2012] - reveals a unique and essentially significant determining register:

Plato asserts cognitive-ontological determination: happiness is a consequence of gnosis (cognition of ideas) and the establishment of a hierarchical cosmos within the soul, where the mind governs affects.

Confucius reveals socio-practical determination: happiness is an emergent property, completely determined from the outside - by the correct implementation of ritualized social actions ("Li," "Xiao") that constitute a harmonious field of relations ("He").

Aristotle substantiates teleological-activity determination: happiness (eudaimonia) is entelechy, the actualization of a person's inner potential through the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue throughout the fullness of life.

Tishchenko in line with phenomenology points to existential determination: health and well-being are determined by the state of authentic, inalienable being-in-the-world, the integrity of the connection with the body, time and meanings.

Proof of correlation with medical etiology models and formation of an integrative matrix of process.

The identified philosophical etiologies are not historical artifacts, but reveal a direct and meaningful correlation with current trends in theoretical and practical medicine, striving to overcome biological reductionism:

The Platonic model finds direct continuation in psychosomatics and cognitive-behavioral approaches, where dysfunctional beliefs and internal imbalances are recognized as a pathogenic factor, and treatment is aimed at restoring cognitive harmony.

The Confucian model receives powerful empirical confirmation in the epidemiology of social determinants of health, recognizing the quality of social connections, integration, and support as key drivers of longevity and disease resistance.

The Aristotelian model conceptually anticipates A. Antonovsky's biopsychosocial model and paradigm of salutogenesis (salutogenesis lat. Salus - "well-being, health"), where health is assessed through the ability to meaningful activity and the realization of life potential, and illness - as their

blocking.

Tishchenko's model enriches clinical practice with an existential-phenomenological dimension, allowing the disease to be interpreted as a form of alienation and setting the task of restoring narrative integrity and meaning to the patient.

2. Philosophical interpretations thus act as rigorous conceptual frameworks for expanding narrow biomedical etiology. They jointly form an integrative etiological matrix, within which the cause of a complex phenomenon (health, illness or well-being) should be searched simultaneously in several interconnected registers: cognitive-structural, socio-practical, teleological-activity and existential-phenomenological.

3. The philosophical understanding of happiness is revealed not as an abstract goal, but as the living architecture of health itself. This is not an end point, but a source and condition of well-being. It offers medicine a new, multidimensional map of causality, where health is created simultaneously in four dimensions: through the acquisition of internal harmony, through the strengthening of social ties, through the full realization of personal potential and through rootedness in a deep sense. It is in the violation of this complex balance, and not in the action of the pathogen, that the causes of the main non-infectious epidemics of our time are rooted - depression, burnout and existential crisis.

Consequently, the result of the work is a radical thesis: genuine human health is health, built according to the drawings of happiness. Philosophical thought, in turn, turns out to be not just speculation, but a necessary project for the medicine of the future, striving to heal not only the body, but also all human life in its entirety.

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**Философский анализ феномена «счастья»
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Аннотация

В настоящей работе проводится мультидисциплинарный теоретический анализ категории «счастья». Категория располагается на стыке теоретической медицины, психологии, нейробиологии и аксиологии и рассматривается в связи с потребностью её качественного измерения. Актуальность исследования связана с необходимостью построения концептуального моста между нормативными моделями счастья в философии и их причинными коррелятами в медицинском познании. В целях формирования целостного биопсихосоциального подхода к здоровью человека даны основные философские интерпретации понятия счастья в их соответствии с современными моделями медицинской этиологии заболеваний и состоянием здоровья личности. Проведена герменевтическая интерпретация реляционно-онтологической парадигмы счастья в типах конфуцианской, платоновской и аристотелевской этики как практической философии. Фокус медицинской этиологии с внутреннего порядка и внешних связей смещается с атрибутивного на функциональный аспект, предвзято современные модели счастья, в которых здоровье и благополучие оцениваются через способность личности к осмысленной деятельности и реализацию жизненного потенциала. По этой причине в биопсихосоциальную модель внесены аксиологическое и экзистенциальное измерения понимания взаимосвязи счастья и здоровья. Определена плюралистическая природа причинности счастья, которая связана с интегративной этиологической матрицей, в рамках которой причинность сложного феномена расположена одновременно на нескольких взаимосвязанных уровнях: когнитивно-структурном, социально-практическом, телеологически-деятельностном и экзистенциально-феноменологическом.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

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Ключевые слова

Человек, личность, счастье, онтология, этиология, здоровье, гармония, экзистенция, ценность, познание, герменевтика, традиция, парадигма, биопсихосоциальный подход, модель, причинность, состояние, фактор.

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